



ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES TRIPOS Part IA

Middle Eastern Studies

Monday 31 May 2010

13.30 – 16.30

MES.6 INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE
MIDDLE EAST

Answer **three** questions. All questions carry equal marks.

STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS

8 page Answer Book x 3
A Rough Work Pad

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

None

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| <p>You may not start to read the questions printed on the subsequent pages of this question paper until instructed that you may do so by the Invigilator</p> |
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- 1 **Either** Why are there both positive and negative evaluations of the monarchy in the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible?
 Or What were the main concerns of the writers of the 'historical books' of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible?
- 2 Discuss the Sassanian imperial policies towards state religions and religious minorities within the empire.
- 3 What are the main reasons given by scholars for the success of the Arabs in forming a huge empire under the banner of Islam?
- 4 How important was the legacy of the Persian empire in shaping the political culture of the 'Abbasid caliphate?
- 5 'Contrary to common belief, the Middle East is the centre of the medieval Jewish world.' Discuss.
- 6 Why were Middle Easterners so unprepared for the Crusader onslaught in the late eleventh century and when did they begin to fight back effectively?
- 7 How were the Safavids able to establish such a durable empire in Iran?
- 8 What factors contributed to the successful emergence of the Ottoman state in the fourteenth century?

END OF PAPER